

HO gan I forth with him to goon
Out of the castel, soth to seye.
Tho saugh I stonde in a valeye,
Under the castel, faste by,
An hous, that domus Dedali,
That Laborintus cleped is,
Nas maad so wonderliche, ywis,
Ne half so queynteliche ywrought.
And evermo, so swift as thought,
This queynte hous aboute wente,
That nevermo hit stille stente.
And therout com so greet a noise,
That, had hit stonden upon Oise,
Men mighte hit han herd esely
To Rome, I trowe sikerly.
And the noyse which that I herde,
For al the world right so hit ferde,
As doth the routing of the stoon
That from thengyn is leten goon.

AND at this hous, of whiche I rede,
Was made of twiggis, falwe, rede,
And grene eek, and som weren
whyte,
Swiche as men to these cages thwyte,
Or maken of these paniers,
Or elles hottes or dossers;
That, for the swough and for the
twiggis,
This hous was also ful of giggis,
And also ful eek of chirkinges,
And of many other werkinges;
And eek this hous hath of entrees
As fele as leves been on trees
In somer, whan they grene been;
And on the roof men may yit seen
A thousand holes, and wel mo,
To leten wel the soun out go.

AND by day, in every tyde,
Ben at the dores open wyde,
And by night, echoon, unshette;
Ne porter ther is non to lette
No maner tydings in to pace;
Ne never reste is in that place,
That hit nis fild ful of tydings,
Other loude, or of whispringes;
And, over alle the houses angles,
Is ful of rouninges and of jangles
Of werre, of pees, of mariages,
Of reste, of labour of viages,
Of abood, of deeth, of lyfe,
Of love, of hate, acorde, of stryfe,
Of loos, of lore, and of winninges,
Of hele, of sekenesse, of bildinges,
Of faire windes, of tempestes,
Of qualme of folk, and eek of bestes;
Of dyvers transmutaciouns
Of estats, and eek of regiouns;
Of trust, of drede, of jelousye,
Of wit, of winningge, of folye;
Of plentee, and of greet famyne,
Of chepe, of derth, and of ruyne;
Of good or mis governement,
Of fyr, of dyvers accident.

AND lo, this hous, of whiche I wryte,
Siker be ye, hit nas not lyte;
For hit was sixty myle of lengthe;
Al was the timber of no strengthe,
Yet hit is founded to endure
Whyl that hit list to aventure,
That is the moder of tydings,
As the see of welles and springes,
And hit was shapen lyk a cage.

ERTES, quod I, in al myn age,
Ne saugh I swich a hous as this.
And as I wondred me, ywis,
Upon this hous, tho war was I
How that myn egle, faste by,
Was perched hye upon a stoon;
And I gan streighte to him goon
And seyde thus: I prey the
That thou a whyl abyde me
For Goddes love, and let me seen
What wondres in this place been;
For yit, paraventure, I may lere
Som good theron, or sumwhat here
That leef me were, or that I wente.

PETER! that is myn entente,
Quod he to me; therfor I dwelle;
But certein, oon thing I thee telle,
That, but I bringe thee therinne,
Ne shalt thou never kunne ginne
To come into hit, out of doute,
So faste hit whirleth, lo, aboute.
But sith that Joves, of his grace,
As I have seyde, wol thee solace
Fynally with swiche thinges,
Uncouth sightes and tydings,
To passe with thyn hevynesse;
Suche routh the hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffrest debonairly,
And wost thyselfen utterly
Disesperat of alle blis,
Sith that fortune hath maad amis
The fruit of al thyn hertes reste
Languisshe and eek in point to breste,
That he, through his mighty meryte,
Wol do thee ese, al be hit lyte,
And yaf expres commaundement,
To whiche I am obedient,
To furthre thee with al my might,
And wisse and teche thee aright
Wher thou maist most tydings here;
Shaltow anon heer many oon lere.

WITH this worde he, right anon,
Hente me up bitwene his toon,
And at a windowe in me broghte,
That in this hous was, as me thoghte,
And therewithal, me thoghte hit stente,
And nothing hit aboute wente,
And me sette in the flore adoun.
But which a congregacioun
Of folk, as I saugh rome aboute
Some within and some withoute,
Nas never seen, ne shal ben eft;
That, certes, in the world nis left
So many formed by Nature,

Ne deed so many a creature;
That wel unethe, in that place,
Hadde I oon foot/brede of space;
And every wight that I saugh there
Rounded ech in othere ere
Anewe tyding prevely,
Or elles tolde al openly
Right thus, and seyde: Nost not thou
That is betid, lo, late or now?

O, quod the other, tel me what;
And than he tolde him this and that,
And swoor therto that hit was sooth:
Thus hath he seyde, and Thus he dooth:
Thus shal hit be: Thus herde I seye:
That shal be found: That dar I leye:

That al the folk that is alyve
Ne han the cunning to discryve
The thinges that I herde there,
What aloude, and what in ere.
But al the wondermost was this:
Whan oon had herd a thing, ywis,
He com forth to another wight,
And gan him tellen, anon right,
The same that to him was told,
Or hit a furlong way was old,
But gan somwhat for to eche
To this tyding in this speche
More than hit ever was.
And nat so some departed nas
That he fro him, that he ne mette
With the thridd; and, or he lette
Any stounde, he tolde him als;
Were the tyding sooth or fals,
Yit wolde he telle hit natheles,
And evermo with more encres
Than hit was erst. Thus north and southe
Went every word fro mouth to mouthe,
And that encresing evermo,
As fyr is wont to quikke and go
From a sparke spronge amis,
Til al a citee brent up is.

AND, whan that was ful yspronge,
And woxen more on every tonge
Than ever hit was, hit wente anon
Up to a windowe, out to goon;
Or, but hit mighte out ther pace,
Hit gan out crepe at som crevace,
And fleigh forth faste for the nones.

AND somtyme saugh I tho, at ones,
A lesing and a sad soth/sawe,
That gonne of aventure drawe
Out at a windowe for to pace;
And, when they metten in that place,
They were achedekked bothe two,
And neither of hem moste out go;
For other so they gonne croude,
Cliche of hem gan cryen loude:
Lat me go first! Nay, but lat me!
And here I wol ensuren thee
With the nones that thou wolt do so,

That I shal never fro thee go.
But be thyn owne sworn brother!
We wil medle us ech with other,
That no man, be he never so wrothe,
Shal han that oon of two, but bothe
At ones, al beside his leve,
Come we a morwe or on eve,
Be we cryed or stille yrouned.
Thus saugh I fals and sooth compouned
Togeder fle for oo tydinge.

HUS out at holes gonne wringe
Every tyding streight to fame;
And she gan yeven eche his name,
After hir disposicioun,
And yaf hem eek duracioun,
Some to wexe and wane sone,
As dooth the faire whyte mone,
And leet hem gon. Ther mighte I seen
Wenged wondres faste fleen,
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blew aboute.

AND, Lord! this hous, in alle tymes,
Was ful of shipmen and pilgrymes,
With scrippes bretful of lesinges,
Entremedled with tydings,
And eek alone by hemselfe.
O, many a thousand tymes twelve
Saugh I eek of these pardoneres,
Curours, and eek messangeres,
With boistes crammed ful of lyes
As ever vessel was with lyes.
And as I alther/fastest wente
Aboute, and dide al myn entente
Me for to pleye and for to lere,
And eek a tyding for to here,
That I had herd of som contree
That shal not now be told for me:
For hit no nede is, redely;
folk can singe hit bet than I;
for al mot out, other late or rathe,
Alle the sheves in the lathe:
I herde a gret noise withalle
In a corner of the halle,
Ther men of love tydings tolde,
And I gan thiderward beholde;
for I saugh renninge every wight,
As faste as that they hadden might;
And everich cryed: What thing is that?
And som seyde: I not never what.
And whan they were alle on an hepe,
Tho behinde gonne up lepe,
And clamben up on othere faste,
And up the nose on hye caste,
And troden faste on othere heles
And stampe, as men don after eles.

ATTE laste I saugh a man,
Which that I nevene naught ne can;
But he semed for to be
A man of greet auctoritee . . .
Unfinished.